

Wabash Heritage Paddlefest Takes to the River on August 18th in New Harmony

When the Harmonie Society, led by George Rapp, settled on the banks of the Wabash River in what would become New Harmony in 1814, they began a relationship with this mighty waterway that continues to this day. The river was the life-blood of the Harmonist's commerce and existence, as it was for the second communal society led by Robert Owen and William Maclure, who bought the town in 1825.



As present residents of the area continue efforts on the third utopian experiment in this historic community of less than one thousand resident, the Wabash River remains a focal point. For the third year, New Harmony will host the Wabash Heritage Paddlefest, an event featuring a 9.7 canoe float from Grayville, Illinois, to New Harmony, as well as a day-long festival celebrating the river. The event will be on Saturday, August 18th, with the float at 10:00 a.m. Information and links to register for Paddlefest 2007 can be found at www.usi.edu/extserv/paddlefest. This year's specialty event promises to raise the bar with trained teams of selected athletes, one from southwest Indiana and the other from southeast Illinois, both in replica "voyager" canoes, racing head-to-head the entire 9.7 mile course. A "day of the longboat" indeed!

The previous two events have "sold-out" of the rental canoes (first registered/first served) with hundreds enjoying the scenic beauty of the river and Southern Indiana. It is, however, a big river and "bring your own boat" participants have swollen the attendance to make this one of the most colorful events on any river, including festivals, awards and "trail openings" on both sides of the Wabash. Some scenes from the past years will tell the story no words could convey...

